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The Grand QUESTION,
Whether War, or no War,
with *SPAIN*,

Impartially CONSIDER'D:

In DEFENCE of the present
Measures against those that delight
in WAR.



L O N D O N:

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The Grand QUESTION,

Whether War, or no War,
with *SPAIN*,

Impartially Consider'd, &c.

THE Endeavours that have been used to inflame the People into an high Dislike of the present Measures, are so flagrant, are so full of an incendiary Spirit, have so manifest a Tendency to Sedition and Rebellion, and are in every View so very criminal, and so big with Mischief, that an honest Man, who means nothing but the publick Good, the Honour of the King, and the Interest of his Country, can't think of them without the greatest Indignation. This has induced me to enter impartially into a particular Discussion of the present Measures, to undeceive those who are desirous of the best

Information they can get, in Matters relating to the Publick, and to recover the Well-meaning from the Infatuation great Numbers have been deluded into. 'Tis to these I write, not to those who have been their Deluders; that, I'm sensible, would be a vain Attempt: Nor to those in the Opposition who are of superior Rank; they need no Conviction, their Experience and Knowledge in Business enables them to make a true Judgment of Affairs, and they, I am sure, are in their real Sentiments with me, whatever they may pretend, or however, for Reasons known to themselves, I may, I think, say now known to every Body else, they may act a counter Part, and seem mighty zealous for a War, unless such Terms can be obtain'd of *Spain*, as they are from all past Experience fully assured never can. To these, therefore, I do not write, but to Men of lower Rank, to the Body of the People, particularly to the People of this City, and more especially the mercantile Part, as those who are more particularly interested in the present Question, Whether War, or no War, with *Spain*, in the present Situation of Affairs. 'Tis no Reflection on Persons of this Rank and Character, to suppose they are not of themselves well qualified to judge of Affairs of State, of Peace and War, of Treaties and Alliances with foreign Powers, and, consequently,

what

what is most prudent and adviseable, most for the Honour of the Crown, and Interest of the Nation, in Matters of this high Nature; 'tis no Reflection, I say, upon the Understandings of such Persons, to suppose them incompetent Judges in these Affairs, and that therefore they are liable to be imposed on by the Misrepresentations of false Patriots, and work'd up into a Heat against their Governors for not pursuing such Measures, as, if pursued, would very probably end in the Ruin of those very Interests, for the Sake of which they have been work'd up into so great a Heat, as if they were going to be betray'd, given up, and lost, by those who are their truest Friends, and are steadily pursuing the wisest and safest Counsels for the Defence and Preservation of them. To these then I address, and for their Information, that they may be able to form a true Judgment of Things, and know who are their real Friends, and who only pretended ones; who mean in earnest the Good of the Nation, and who mean nothing but themselves; I will, as briefly, and yet as clearly as I can, lead them into a true View of the present Measures.

The Points I shall consider are these two:

First, Whether the Advice of the two Houses of Parliament to the Crown was right. And, next, Whether the Ministers have

have acted in Pursuance of, and Conformity to this Advice.

The Advice of the Parliament was, that his Majesty would use his Endeavours with the King of *Spain* to obtain effectual Relief for his injured Subjects; that is, in other Words, to procure Satisfaction to our Merchants, and Security for the future for the Trade and Navigation of his Subjects in the *American* Seas, to which we have an undoubted Right by Treaty, and the Law of Nations; and that if his Majesty shall not be able to obtain, from the Equity and Friendship of the King of *Spain*, such Satisfaction as may be reasonably expected from a faithful and good Ally, they will effectually support his Majesty in such Measures as shall be found necessary.

This is the Substance of the Sense of the Houses upon this Subject: They advise, first, to try in a friendly Way to obtain Justice to our injured Merchants, and Security for the Time to come; these are the two Points proposed to be obtained, first, if possible, in an amicable Way, *Satisfaction* and *Security*.

The Question then is, Was this right, or not? And here sure I may be allowed to say it was right Advice, because it was the Advice of Parliament; this all reasonable Men must allow, is a strong Presumption in favour of the Advice they gave. Miserable are the

the People, if they can once be persuaded they are not safe in the Hands of their own Representatives ! This is so monstrous a Supposition, that I shall spend no Words to shew the Absurdity of it, in a Case where Reason and Experience are against them, in all quiet Times, when the Nation was not universally in an unnatural Ferment and Rage. Even in the Reigns preceding the Revolution, as corrupt as the Courts then were, and as desirous as Members might be of the Favours of those Courts, they never could be prevailed on to go into Measures contrary to the Interest of their Country, when they saw their Tendency, and were not imposed on first themselves. 'Tis then a most reasonable Prejudice in favour of the Advice given by Parliament, that it was theirs, upon full Examination into Matters, and after mature Deliberation. But their Advice, as I have said, was to proceed by way of Treaty first, and not immediately to plunge the Nation into a War, if Redress of Grievances could be had without it. But not to retrench myself under the mere Authority of Parliament, and rest in Prejudices, in Favour of it, however reasonable, let us enter into the Merits of the Cause, and consider distinctly whether this really was right Advice, or not. To judge of this, we must take this along with us, That the Event of War in general is always uncertain ;

uncertain; and if so, we must consider not only what might be the Consequence of a successful War, with which we are very apt to flatter ourselves; but likewise what would be the probable Issue of an unsuccessful one. Fighting pitched Battles in the Field, or engaging in a great Fight at Sea, are very different Things from Battels fought over a Dish of Tea, or a Glass of Wine, as all know who are in the least acquainted with History, or can remember only the Wars ourselves have been engaged in since the Revolution. This, then, is the first Thing to be consider'd, the Uncertainty of War, when once begun.

Next, we should consider that War is particularly disadvantageous to a trading Nation; and of all Wars, a War with *Spain* is most so to the *British* Nation, as it deprives us of our most valuable Commerce, as our Trade with *Spain* is by all confess'd to be. How much the Merchants would suffer by it, nobody wants to be told; but what so much hurts the Merchants, is not less prejudicial to the Publick, since Trade is the great Source of our Revenues, without which, 'tis impossible to make War with Success, tho' all things else were favourable and promised well. But farther,

A War is more than ordinarily disadvantageous at present, considering the Situation of Affairs in *Europe*, and that of our natural

ral Allies. For the Emperor has work more than enough upon his Hands, however desirous he might be to assist us; and if the present War he is engaged in were at an End, this War and the last have so exhausted his Finances, that all the Assistance he could give us, must needs amount to a very little; and if we can't find the Money, 'tis in vain, if he, or the Princes of the Empire could find Men for us. And as for *Holland*, I presume, nobody expects in the present Situation of Affairs, much help from them; 'tis easy to see they are in no Disposition to join in War; they still feel the Expence they were at in the last, and remember how they were betray'd at last by the Ally from whom they least expected it. This made them, when the late War was breaking out between *France* and the Emperor, agree to a Neutrality for the *Low Countries*, that they might not be dragged into a War against their Wills, and which they knew they could so very ill bear. This makes them, under the ill Usage they have received from the *Spaniards* in the *West-Indies* (for they have their Share, we are not the only Sufferers) this, I say, has made them decline all hostile Measures, and the endeavouring to do themselves right by the way of Arms, and to content themselves with trying what Redress can be obtained

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tained by fair Means in the Way of Treaty. But if they will not pursue forcible Methods in defence of their own Rights, can we expect they will go into a War to defend ours? If therefore we go into a War, we go *alone*, and without the Assistance of our Allies; for these are the only two of any Consequence. As to the Northern Crowns, *France* has already bought one, by large annual Subsidies, and is in Treaty with the other. And if it were not so, what is it we could expect from them, but to be furnished with Men, if we can find Money?

But is it so with *Spain*? Are they without Allies also? Are we sure *France* will not assist *Spain*, when a Branch of the House of *Bourbon* is upon the *Spanish* Throne? Was not the strong Apprehension that we and all *Europe* had of this, the great Reason of the Grand Alliance, to prevent the Union of these two Crowns in one and the same Family? And has any thing happened since to lessen these Apprehensions, or to shew they were ill founded? Is not a double Match between the two Crowns every Day talk'd of as a Thing done? And is it any extraordinary Supposition, to suppose such Matches would be attended with an offensive and defensive Alliance, if there be not one already? Would not *France* be glad of an Opportunity to reconcile itself to
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the Court of *Spain* ; and make it some amends for the Chagrin they have given it by their late Treaty with the Emperor ? And for purchasing to themselves *Lorain* at the Expence of *Tuscany*, and the other *Italian* Dominions, which thereby are given away from *Spain* ? Suppose then we could in other Respects make War with *Spain* upon an equal Foot, are we alone a Match for *France* and *Spain* both ? They that think so, shew themselves to be extremely ignorant in the History of the two great Wars we have been engaged in since the Revolution. Is it not then highly reasonable, is it not absolutely necessary we should be sure, *France* won't take Part against us, before we enter into a War with *Spain* ? But that is what we are so far from being sure of, that I think, I may say, we are morally sure of the contrary, from a Consideration of the mutual Interests of the two Crowns, which is the only firm Cement in all Alliances : 'Twas not for nothing, 'twas not for a mere Point of Honour, it was to promote the lasting Interests of *France*, that they were at so vast an Expence to settle *Philip* on the Throne of *Spain*.

But some People will fancy, or at least pretend to think, that *France* will not engage in a new War, at least while the Cardinal lives.

But first, what Assurance have they of this? This Opinion may prove to be a fatal Mistake to us, as it has already done to the Emperor. It was the strong Persuasion the Imperial Court had of the Cardinal's pacifick Temper, and that nothing could bring him into a War, that made them venture to give *France* the Provocation they did in Opposition to *Stanislaus*, the Father of the *French* Queen, and that at a time, when the Emperor was in no Condition to defend himself against *France* and its Allies in any one Part of his Dominions, neither in *Germany* nor *Italy*. They thought themselves sure that they might do what they would in the *Polish* Affairs, and that nothing could rouse the pacifick Cardinal into a Resentment of it, so as to advise a War. But they soon found themselves mistaken, and paid dearly for it; either the Cardinal's Temper was not so pacifick as they had imagined, or it was over-ruled by the Counsels of the other Ministers. And what Security have we, it will not be so again, if we should attack the Crown of *Spain*? The Contrary is from Reasons of State infinitely more probable.

But for Argument sake, we will suppose the Cardinal is as pacifick as they would have him; and that by his great Influence he can over-rule all Counsels for contrary
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Measures. I would ask, how long is the Cardinal to live? Is it not almost a Miracle that he is now alive? Has he not had within a few Months such severe Attacks, and such Returns of them, as make it impossible, that at his great Age, he should be able to hold out much longer? And is any one who knows any thing of Foreign Affairs, so little acquainted with the Spirit of the *French* Court at this time, as not to know, that when he dies these pacifick Measures may die with him? But I will again, in compliment to those I am arguing with, suppose, it will not be so; that *France*, as well as the rest of *Europe*, will look on, and leave *England* and *Spain*, like two single Combatants, to stand alone, and fight it out between themselves.

Let it then be resolv'd, at all Adventures, to go into War with *Spain*; I would humbly ask, where it shall be made, by Land or by Sea? Not by Land; I take for granted nobody means that on our Part. We have been taught to have a thoro' Dislike of consuming Land Wars; nor indeed is it at all practicable with regard to our making War on *Spain*. For to do this, we must have a good Land Army, which will require an infinite Number of Transports; a thing not to be had but at a vast Expence, and which if catched in a Storm, would in great part probably be
lost,

lost, or at least so shatter'd and dispersed, as utterly to defeat, for that time, the intended Expedition. Besides this, we must have a good Body of Horse, a thing not possible to be carried by Sea to such a Distance; the Bay of *Biscay* would soon destroy them all, or render them unfit for Service. Then where have we a Port to land our Forces at, what Place of Arms? Where our Magazines for the Subsistence of our Troops; where a sufficient Quantity of Ammunition and Artillery to undertake a Siege? And if we had them all, what Place shall be attack'd? Shall it be *Cadiz*? Can we take it by Surprise? If not, shall we not find it in a good Condition of Defence at Land, and impossible to be attack'd by Sea? Have we forgot the Duke of *Ormond's* Expedition against *Cadiz* in the Beginning of the last War? The Success of which depended wholly on the Hopes of a Surprise, but which the Execution of that Design render'd impossible, and the whole proved a most ridiculous Affair, and would have prov'd a very unhappy one, had they not, by great good Fortune in their Return fallen in with the Galeons at *Vigo*; without which, all the Glory they had brought home to answer the Expence of the Expedition, had been the infamous plundering of Port St. *Mary*. In short, we want every thing

thing necessary to make a successful Land War in *Spain*. A Land-war therefore, I presume, is what no body thinks of on the Part of *England* against *Spain*. But is it clear it will be so on the Part of *Spain*? May not they attempt a Land-war upon us? Have we forgot the Year 1719? When by the vigorous and unexpected Efforts of *Alberoni*, a *Spanish* Squadron with Transports, and a Body of 5000 Men, were almost upon our Coast in favour of the *Pretender*, before our Court knew they had left their own Ports? Have we forgot the Consternation the Nation was then in, when the late King communicated to his Parliament the Intelligence he had receiv'd; at which very time the *Spaniards* had probably been landed in *Scotland* (and some actually did land) had not a Storm providentially dispersed their Fleet in the critical Minute, when they were almost in Sight of us? and thereby obliged their shatter'd Ships to return *re infecta* to their own Coasts. Well then, *Spain* may make War upon us by Land, and engage us in the worst of Wars, a War among ourselves in Support of the *Pretender*. But if we make War, 'tis allow'd it must be by Sea. But I would ask how, and where? Where shall we begin? In *Europe* or the *West Indies*? Say in *Europe*: What is it we propose to do? Do we propose to fight the
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Royal Navy of *Spain* in a fair Engagement, and thereby give a decisive Stroke? We may intend it, but *Spain* begs to be excused; she knows our Strength, and her own Weakness too well, to put the Event of a War with us upon such a foot; they will not be at the Expence of fitting out a Fleet to cope with us in a fair Sea Fight; and if they would, I much question if they could; they might build Ships, but I hope and believe they could not sufficiently man them; they therefore will save the Expence, and so far will let us ride Masters of the Sea. But tho' *Spain* do not come into the Ocean with a great Fleet, will they be idle all the while? Will they leave the Ocean quietly to us? See what they did in the Years 18 and 19, and from thence learn what they will do again: They will make a pyratrical War upon us, and infest all the Coast from *Bayone* to *Cadiz* with Privateers of their own, and of other Nations under *Spanish* Colours; they will swarm about the Mouth of the *Tagus*, and the Port of *Lisbon*; and nothing will be able to pass from hence to *Lisbon* or the *Mediterranean*, or from the *Mediterranean* and *Lisbon* hither, but there will be great Danger of its falling into those Hands? This is of all ways of making War with *Spain* the most unequal, because that Part of the Seas is always full of our Merchant Ships, of which, consequently, we may lose
great

great Numbers, as in fact we have formerly. But what Reprisals can we make? In *Europe* none, or next to none. For their Trade in the *European* Seas is so little, that there is no room for Reprisals, no proportion of Commerce between the two Nations. Were we as successful in Captures as heart could wish, we should, upon an even Lay, lose 40 Ships before we could take one. Besides that, the Nation is not a jot the richer for what we should take, but we should be the poorer for every Ship we lose. Because what was taken would be the Perquisite of the Captors, and none of it would come into the publick Treasury. And yet this is all our Fleet could do; it might preserve *Gibraltar* in case of a Siege, and in some little degree, but at a prodigious Expence, protect our Trade. But what could it do more? 'Tis impossible, without a considerable Land Force to take any Place of Consequence, as I have before observed; and if we could, what should we do with it? Two or three such Acquisitions as *Gibraltar*, would be the splendid but certain Ruin of us. But could we do nothing? Yes, we might ravage and burn their Coast, and make a Number of poor People in the open Country very miserable: But what Good would this do? Would it make the Merchant any amends for his great Losses? Would it enable *England* to carry on a suc-

cessful War, contribute any thing towards a good Peace? Certainly not. Besides, I would ask what the Expence of such Bombardments is? Let the Expence of Lord C———'s Expedition to *Vigo* in 1719 be computed, and compared with the Damage we did the *Spaniards* there, and then tell me what we gain'd by it, or if we had not much better have staid at Home. The Commander indeed would have lost the Glory of that Expedition, but the Nation would have saved the Money, and that no small Sum.

Let us now see, if the Matter would be at all mended by carrying the War into the *West-Indies*. What is it we could do there? Could we get any Settlement there from the *Spaniards*? And if we could, do we desire it? I don't know we do; but if we did, it is forbidden Fruit; this can't be done without a Land Force; and the *Havannah*, if I am rightly inform'd, is as well fortify'd as *Cadiz*. But we may take their Galeons, or hinder them from coming to *Europe*, which is next to taking them. Let us then consider each of these.

First, How shall we take them? If we fit out a large Squadron to send into these Seas, can it be kept a Secret in a Nation where nothing can be done without consent of Parliament? And where by the Libetry of the Press every thing is made publick?

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Have not all the foreign Ministers Admittance to hear our Debates in Parliament? Does not *Geraldino*, or his Agents, know every Word that is said in either of the Houses of Parliament? How then can any Preparation for War be a Secret? But if *Spain* knew it, is any body so ignorant as not to know, that the *Spaniard* can dispatch a light clean Frigate or two to the *West-Indies* in half the time we can send a Squadron thither? And if so, what will be the Consequence? Undoubtedly this; that if the Galeons were loaded, they will immediately be unloaded; or if not already loaded, the Loading will be put off to a more convenient Time, and when it can be done with Safety; so that all we can in such Case hope for is, that we may possibly burn the Hulks: A mighty Business, and well worth all the Expence we must have been at to do it; and even that may not be in our Power, they may be drawn up into so secure Ports, or into so shallow a Water, that our Ships of War can't come within the reach of them; 'tis therefore a very wild and chimerical Project, to fit out a great Squadron with the sole Prospect of taking the Galeons with their rich Lading on board them.

But if we can't take 'em, yet we may hinder their Return to *Europe*, and that would greatly distress the *Spaniards*; and so certainly it would, if their Return could be

hinder'd for any long time. But how is that to be done? Why, by lying a long time in some convenient Station to intercept them, against they shall come out. But where is that? At the *Bastimentos*? Have we forgot the Outcries and Clamours on the account of a Squadron lying there in the Year 1726, as if our Men and Ships were ruined by it? And can those Gentlemen who were then so loud on that Occasion, and who are now so eager for a War, tell us where a Squadron may be station'd with better Success? If they can't, all we shall get in this way, will be to incommode the *Spaniards* by a Delay of their *West-India* Treasures for some short time, with a thousand times more Damage to ourselves. What is it then we can expect from a War in those Parts, if we can neither make ourselves Masters of any of their Settlements, nor of the Treasure they bring from them? Two or three Men of War plying in those Seas may chance to get now and then a rich Prize, but 'tis a much greater Chance they will not. A Squadron, 'tis I think evident, cannot, because the *Spaniards* can't fail of Notice, and having notice will be upon their Guard. But admit 'twere thus, that we could have the good Fortune to take a rich Fleet coming from the *West-Indies*, whose Riches are they laden with? Does any body want to be told, that two Parts
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in three, or at least one half of that great Treasure belong to the *French*; the Remainder to the *English*, *Dutch*, *Italians*, and *Spaniards*; and that the Share of the *Spaniards* does not exceed a tenth Part: And can it be imagin'd that other Nations, and above all the *French*, the most concerned, and the most powerful of all, would bear that their Properties on board these Vessels, when to so great Value, shall become a Prey to *England*? But might we not save their Shares for them, and confiscate only the proper Goods and Riches of the *Spaniards*? To talk thus, is talking like Children. This supposes such Care, and Virtue, and Self-denial in Seamen, and such a Complaisance towards us, and such an Indifference in the *French* and other Nations for their own Properties, as is not to be expected. The Treasure will be embezel'd; and if it were not, it would be impossible to persuade the Parties concerned, that no Injury was done them; and their respective Shares, after all, could not without the greatest Difficulty be ascertained.

Suppose us now for one Year to have made War with no better Success, or to no better Effect, than I have here represented, what shall we do the next? Shall we have any Stomach to go on another Year? Is there any better Prospect of Success? Shall we have any new Resources to carry on the
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War with more Vigour? Whence must they come? A great Expence has been incurred, the Merchants have suffer'd extremely, by many Captures, by high Insurances, and the Expence for Convoys; the Revenue in the mean time is greatly lessen'd, the Interest on Loans rises, and the Expence of the War is in every Article by that means increas'd, while our Abilities every Day grow less; and there is not the least Prospect of carrying on the War a second Year with more Advantage than the first. I am apt to think, those deluded Citizens who are now so hot for a War, would be amongst the forwardest to cry out against it, and would be very copious in setting forth the Mischief of an ineffectual and yet ruinous War, and be very impatient for a Peace upon almost any Terms. Certainly, when we have for two or three Years made such a War as this, we shall all unite in most heartily wishing for a Peace. But what a Peace can we expect, when we have shewn *Spain* how little we have been able to hurt them, and how greatly we have hurt ourselves? Will they reimburse us the Expence of the War, or give us better Terms than, than they are willing to agree to now? Can the first be imagin'd? Can it enter into any body's Head? Why then was it not insisted on at the End of the last War, when we had a better Opportunity of having any Demands we should think fit to make,

make, complied with, than we can ever hope to have again? Why was not a Treaty for our *West-India* Trade made then upon the high and advantageous Terms it is now demanded? *Now*, I say, when we have no Pretence from Conquest, or upon any score whatever, to expect any other Favour from *Spain*, but what we are entitled to by the Treaties now subsisting between the two Nations; which I desire may be remember'd, since it seems to be entirely forgot; That we have no Pretence to ask any Extension of Commerce, or any Connivance or Indulgence from *Spain*; in short, to nothing but what we are strictly and justly entitled to in virtue of our Treaties with them.

If such a Treaty as is now insisted on by those who are so eager for a War, if all their Demands be not immediately complied with, could not be obtain'd then, when we had *Spain*, as it were, at our Mercy, and could bribe King *Philip*, with *Spain* and both the *Indies*, to come into our Measures, how vain is it to expect it now, when we have no such Advantage over that Crown! If it could be obtained then, why was it not? If it could not then, why is it ask'd now?

But, once more, let us suppose we had gone into the War, and that with better Success than can reasonably be expected; an End, sooner or later, must be put to it, the sooner the better for *England*, as we are a trading Nation.

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But how is a War to have an End? Why certainly by a Treaty of Peace. A Treaty, then, of one Kind or other, some Time or other, must be made. To argue, therefore, against the present Convention, upon a Pretence that all Treaty with *Spain* is to no Purpose, and that no Treaty with that Crown, so far, at least, as relates to the *West-Indies*, will ever be observed, is saying nothing; since that will equally hold against all Treaties, let them be made with or without a previous War, and is, in Effect, declaring for eternal War; which, I presume, is not the Meaning of the Gentlemen I am now arguing with, and who seem to be so angry that a War is not already enter'd into. Their Leaders, I am persuaded, will be very willing to end the War as soon as it is begun, or rather before it is begun, if the Clamour they have raised for a War will but help them to put an End to the present Administration, and let those in who have been so long excluded from a Share in it. Mortifying Thought! and the more, as some have lost, by their Opposition, all they aim'd at; who, had they been quiet, could not have miss'd what they have so much set their Hearts upon. That this is their true and only Meaning, is evident from hence, that they have laboured so much to have the People believe that the Counsels that have prevail'd, and the Measures that have been pursued,

sued, have been the Counsels and Measures of one Minister only, who has taken the whole of this weighty Affair upon himself, exclusive of all the rest, who have the Honour to be in the Secret of his Majesty's Counsels, and in the high Offices of State. This they tell the People with great Assurance, tho' they well know nothing is more false, and that the Minister they shew so implacable an Ill-will to, has, in this important Affair, done nothing of his own Head, taken nothing solely upon himself; but that every Thing has been duly consider'd, and upon very mature Deliberation resolved and agreed to in Council. This is Fact; this they know to be so, and yet are not asham'd, in all Company, and in all their Libels, most strongly to assert the contrary.

In short, the Measures taken, be they right, or be they wrong, are not the Measures of a single Minister, but the joint Counsels of almost all the great Persons who surround the Throne, and are chief in Dignity and Office about the King.

But to return from this Digression, in which I have been insensibly drawn: I have plainly and clearly shewn, what it was the Parliament advised, and what I apprehend were their Reasons for such Advice; that is, why they were for trying the way of Treaty once more, before they plunged the Nation

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in a War, which 'tis easy to get into, but not so easy, when once begun, to get well out of.

The next Point to be consider'd is, Whether the M——rs have acted in Pursuance of the Advice given by Parliament, as it was their Duty to do. The two Points the Parliament recommended to the King, as I have already observed, were,

Satisfaction to our Merchants,

And a *future Security* for our Trade and Navigation.

The first of these Points is finally settled and adjusted by a Convention which has been laid before the two Houses. But the Gentlemen in the Opposition, were not pleased to wait to see what it was before they passed a Judgment upon it; they pronounced it a damn'd Treaty, before they certainly knew any one Article of it. A Behaviour extremely dutiful and decent no doubt. To judge of the Satisfaction to the Merchants stipulated in this Convention, we must remember, that the *Spaniards* have Demands upon us, as well as we upon them, for the Ships of War taken from them in the Battle off *Syracuse* in the Year 1718; and that when the Demands on both Sides are stated, all that is to be paid by the King of *Spain*, is the Difference upon the Balance of that Accompt. I have indeed heard a Person of Distinction fire extremely upon this Head in a very large
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Company; I think it was the Day the Parliament met, or the next; he told the Company, he had heard a Sum was stipulated to be paid the King of *Spain* for the Ships then taken by the *English* Fleet, but he hoped in God, it was not true; it was such a Dishonour to the Nation, that he thought it impossible it could be true; it was so strange a Thing, so mean, so dishonourable, as never had been done by any Nation; with a great deal more to that Purpose. Now I would ask this Gentleman, whether he was in earnest or not, and really meant what he said: If he did not, where was his Sincerity? If he did, where his deep Knowledge in Political Affairs, not to know Transactions so publick, as the Treaties of 1721, and of *Seville* 1729, or so soon to have forgot them, and in so capital a Point as this, the Satisfaction to be given to the King of *Spain* for those Ships?

But, to refresh the Gentleman's Memory, I will insert the Fifth Article of the Treaty made at *Madrid* in 1721.

“ It is also agreed, that his *Britannick*
 “ Majesty shall cause to be restor'd to his *Catholick* Majesty, all the Ships of the *Spanish* Fleet which were taken by that of
 “ *England* in the naval Battle that was
 “ fought in the Month of *August*, 1718, in
 “ the Seas of *Sicily*, with the Guns, Sails,
 “ Rigging, and other Equipage, in the Con-

“ dition they are at present ; or else the Value of those which may have been sold, at the same Price that the Purchasers shall have given, according to the Proofs and Vouchers.” The Articles preceding this relate to the Restitution and Satisfaction to be made on the Part of the King of *Spain* to his *Britannick* Majesty and his Subjects ; all which, is, in Substance, the same with the Articles importing Restitution on both Sides in the subsequent Treaty of *Seville*.

By this we see the Demand of *Spain* for Restitution of those Ships, is no new Demand ; it is not now begun ; it did not begin at the Treaty of *Seville*, it was an old Demand ; it was allowed and agreed to in the *Madrid* Treaty in 21. a Treaty made by those who were the chief Ministers at the Time when that extraordinary Transaction happen'd, who were the best Judges that could be, of the Justice of the King of *Spain's* Demand, and thought it no Reflection on their own Honour, or the Honour of the Nation, to comply with it ; and since they thought so, who were then in the Secret of Affairs, and had all the Biass Ministers could possibly have, for very obvious Reasons to dispute that Demand, since they, I say, thought it reasonable to be complied with, we may be very sure it was so.

But if this be so, on making up Accounts on both Sides, nothing can be due from *Spain* to

to *England*, but what, upon the Balance, appears to be the Difference between them; and as this Sum is specified in the Convention now made, and a short Term fix'd for the Payment in Money here in *London*, there is no possible Room for Complaint on this Head, or for saying the Ministers have not clearly pursued the Advice given by Parliament.

As to the other Point, the future Security of our Trade and Navigation in the *American* Seas; that, with several other Points, is agreed to be settled by Plenipotentiaries named in the Convention, who are to begin to treat within six Weeks from the Ratification of the Convention, and are limited to the Space of eight Months; no long Term for the Business that will be before them! And, till that Term is expired, can any Body say that all the just Demands of *Great-Britain* will not be complied with, and settled to our Satisfaction? I say *just* Demands, because some People are taught to think they ought to have every Thing complied with they think fit to ask; they fancy Things are in the State they were at the Treaty of *Utrecht*, that *Spain* lies at our Feet, and must refuse nothing that we can think will be further advantageous to our Trade. But this is a Part Ministers even at that Time did not think fit to take, when *Spain* was in its lowest State, *viz.* at the End of the last War; they were so
tender

tender of new Demands, or of asking any Concessions even then, that could be thought extraordinary and exorbitant, that they gave up our most valuable Privileges of Trade, (which was rectified by subsequent Treaties after his late Majesty's Accession to the Throne;) and they gave up the most reasonable Demand in the World; they did not omit it, but receded from it after they had asked it, and that is a District of Land adjoining to *Gibraltar*. This they ask'd of the *French* Ministry, who treated for *Spain*, as well as *France*. These tell them gravely, they dare not so much as ask such a Thing of King *Philip*; and they acquiesced in the Answer. Did our Ministers act thus, then, in these Circumstances of Affairs, at the End of a most glorious War; and is it now expected that *Spain* should grant Things that were not asked then? Can any Man of Understanding have the Face to say and insist on this? I should be amazed to see this. No, 'tis impossible. What we complain of is the Infraction of Treaties; and all we can justly demand, is, that those Rights should be secured to us, which by our Treaties we are entitled to. If we ask any thing farther, the King of *Spain* will be well-warranted to say, we have no Right by any Treaty subsisting between the two Crowns to such Demand; and if he gives this Answer, and it be a true one, shall we go into a War rather than

than acquiesce in it? Shall we go to War, for Claims we are no way entitled to? Will any Person of Figure and Distinction advise this? Would any Person in the Opposition, were he in the Ministry, act so extravagant a Part, as to plunge the Nation into a most pernicious and expensive War, to support unprecedented and unwarrantable Claims? Or if any Minister could be hot-headed enough to pursue such Measures, would not these Gentlemen who are so eager for a War now, be the most forward to condemn him, as a foolish and wicked Minister? Most certainly they would, and with the greatest Justice.

All then that is more than what by Treaty we are entitled to, is out of the Question; the King of *Spain* can't be expected to grant more, no wise Minister will ask more, that he may not have the Mortification to be denied what he has no Pretence to ask.

As far as yet appears, the Ministers have conformed to the Advice of Parliament; they have tried the friendly way of Treaty first. They have obtained Acknowledgment of the past Injuries suffered by our Merchants, with Reparation to them: They have obtained a Stipulation that all Causes of Complaint shall be removed for the future: And they have laid as good a Foundation for settling that Security by Treaty,
and

and according to Treaties, without a War, as could be reasonably expected from a War. And if they can do this, they shall have my Thanks, and I hope will have the Thanks of every true *Briton*.

F I N I S.

